

A MOMENTARY **WAR**

FROM THE HOUSE OF A HUNDRED GRANDMOTHERS

JOSEPH ZITT

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from the House of a Hundred Grandmothers

Joseph Zitt

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To the staff, residents, and family
at the House of a Hundred Grandmothers,
and to all who do what they can
to find moments of peace
in worlds at war

Introduction

I moved from America to Israel in November 2017. My family here lived in Herzliya. Some were at the retirement community that we came to call The House of a Hundred Grandmothers. I found an apartment nearby.

In the summer of 2024, I retired and also moved into the House.

In June, 2025, war began with Iran then (we hope) quickly ended.

These are the newsletters that I sent out during the war.

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Herzliya, Israel
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Saturday, June 14th, 2025

We're OK, so far, here at the House of a Hundred Grandmothers. We've been blasted awake and summoned to the shelters (fortunately, in my case, just outside my apartment door) by wailing alarms at about 1, 3, and 5 AM Saturday morning. The biggest booms that I have ever heard have followed.

During the 1 AM alert, a neighbor is upset that, due to a miscommunication with a caregiver, she can't get at her phone and hear the radio. I sit next to her and bring up local news radio on my phone. At least that's what I hope it is. The radio voices are speaking so fast that I have only a vague idea what they're saying.

During the 3 AM alert, I show her an app where she can get Israel news in her native French. Not radio, but at least a liveblog. And I explain to her clearly which parts of the hallway are safest from attack.

During the 5 AM alert, we all bring chairs out into the hallway. We quickly fall back asleep in them.

We now have enough warning time that apps often let us know of upcoming alarms a few minutes before the alarms actually trigger. This had an unintended consequence yesterday: when the first warning went off, enough people around the country suddenly rushed toward the shelters that a massive group of Android phones' movement-detection-thingamabob got activated, and Google reported an earthquake. Oops. We have those, too, but this wasn't that.

They're keeping us in our rooms. The dining hall is closed. At 8:30 AM, the Head of Staff and the CEO of the House bring us our breakfasts and suppers for the day. (They're both dairy meals, so they're delivered separately from the meat-based lunch.) Synagogue services, as well as all other gatherings, are canceled.

The House's nurse on duty comes up at 9 AM. I usually swap out my daily container of medications at lunch. Since we're not gathering, she's going door to door. I discover that, in the confusion, I haven't taken any of last night's or this morning's pills. I take the morning's as she stands there, and we swap the container for my new one, with the pills for tonight and tomorrow morning.

The Head of Staff and the CEO come up again at 11:30 with lunch: goulash, rice, peas and carrots, and mashed potatoes. I don't really like mashed potatoes, but the CEO just says "potatoes" (which, in other

forms, the kitchen does really well), and I don't realize what it is until it hits my plate. So be it.

Half an hour later, one of the serving staff bursts in calling out "Ice cream!" I cheer, "Yay!" and accept a sort of creamsicle. Since it's a meat-based lunch, as always, it's non-dairy ice cream, but it's good.

I get messages on Facebook from someone looking to evacuate from near the shore. Their house doesn't have a shelter, and they can't get to the nearest quickly enough. They may go to someone in a town where they used to live, which isn't being bombed. Fortunately, their little girl is already there for the weekend. At home, she'd be terrified. (Later, I hear that they'll be staying with a friend who has a shelter in the next town over.)

I'm seeing images of windows blown out not far from here. The papers are showing the buildings that got the direct hits. For security, they're not saying where, other than the city, but I could probably find rumors of the info, at least, were I to dig for it. Several people have died in the attacks. Dozens have been injured. Some key hospitals have shifted their work to underground levels.

I watch a clip of Fox News coverage live from Tel Aviv last night. Early on, the sound of missile alarms blares out from the clip and the computer. I quickly crank the sound way down to avoid panicking the neighbors. Our walls are thick enough that it's almost impossible to hear what's happening in the next apartment, but I do it just in case. Later, I send the same clip to a WhatsApp group, with a warning about the alarm in its audio.

A relative tells me, when I ask on WhatsApp, that automatically translated posts that I see beginning with either "Amalek" or "MLK" are getting auto-bungled. The Hebrew acronym "אמלק" (equivalent to "A-M-L-K") expands to mean "Too Long; Didn't Read" – the famous English "TL;DR" (used online, for those who don't know, before summaries of longer material).

In the afternoon, I visit a relative who is, for the moment, staying in the Continual Care center downstairs. (I'm not sure beforehand if I'm allowed to leave my apartment, but when I get there, I'm told it's OK.) We go out into the lobby for a while, away from the nonstop noise.

The booms had awakened people in Continual Care, too, but they were safe in their beds. Those by open windows, though, found it even more frightening.

In the lobby, I see other residents, alone or with friends, caregivers, or relatives. I wave or say “*Shabbat shalom*” to those whom I recognize. Some residents’ family members hassle the staff, as if their own relatives are the only important people there.

A resident who sits across from me at lunch comes through with his caregiver. I get up and embrace him. He doesn’t seem quite clear as to where he is or what his situation is nowadays, but communicates through prayers and touch. He gives me a blessing and another to my relative, then continues to the other part of the building.

Some of us discuss why we did the “preemptive strike” when we did. My hunch: our maneuver, of sneaking weaponry across the border right under their noses, seemed rather like the surprise that Ukraine pulled off a couple of weeks (?) ago. I wonder if we were concerned that that may have clued Iran in that we were about to try pretty much the same thing.

Of course, everyone is warning everyone else of severe consequences if anyone does anything else. And everyone is ignoring each other’s warnings.

It looks like we’re expecting more attacks tonight and in the coming days. I wish the hallway were wide enough for my big comfy chair, in which I sleep half the time anyway.

Home Front Command said this afternoon that we no longer need to stay close to bomb shelters. I remain wary of getting far enough away that I wouldn’t be able to get to one quickly, in case they decide that we do need them again.

Meanwhile, a selfie shows up on Facebook by a friend from my last job. This may only seem bizarre to someone my age or older, but it appears that he’s in a safer place than here or, from what I see in the news, in some of the US. He’s comfortably shopping in Hanoi.

In the evening, we get word that they’ll be delivering meals again tomorrow (Sunday). No gatherings will be planned. Schools and workplaces are to be closed again.

I’ll send this out, then try to watch some TV other than news. If there’s more news, we’ll hear the alarms.

Sunday, June 15th, 2025

Around 11 PM Saturday night, Home Front Command sends out the alert before the alarm, saying that missiles are on their way. Several of us head out into the hallway, here at the House of a Hundred Grandmothers. The alarm doesn't happen. Sometime later in the hour, the voice on the overhead audio system mumbles something about the shelters. We either have to enter them or are free to go back to the apartments. None of us are quite sure. We pick up our chairs and head back to our beds.

The news tells us that the missiles ended up near Haifa. Later, we find out that four women, all from the same Arab family in a nearby town, including a schoolteacher and a noted university student, are among the dead.

The official municipal WhatsApp sends out a message about new sets of alerts from Home Front Command. That first one apparently was just to tell us to be near a shelter. Another one (which I don't think I've seen or heard yet) will say that there will be missiles in ten minutes. The usual alarms will tell us to get into a shelter within a minute and a half and stay there for at least ten minutes. The app should tell us when to head back home.

Sometime after 2 AM, there are more app alerts. I get out of bed and sit in my comfy chair, phone in hand.

The real alarms come a while later. I sit outside the door in my kitchen chair. My neighbor is already there. Apparently her caregiver hasn't gotten word on the change in signals, and she's been sitting out there since the 2 AM alert. Other neighbors join us.

There are more big booms, as well as low flying jets. A steady thrumming, maybe a helicopter, is nearby. One caregiver who had worked as an aircraft technician is away. Her hearing and knowledge are so acute that she could probably tell us the aircraft's model, brand, and color. (Now I'm vaguely remembering a commercial from years back that used that gag.)

Conversation flies around the family WhatsApp group, as well as the one for my ensemble south of Tel Aviv. We're all safe, though some there had to walk for quite a distance to get to the community shelter. One person has been reported killed in another city to the south, where I would get off the train for rehearsals (until they shut down the station at the start of the war due to the shortage of railway personnel).

Early reports tell of impacts in cities near here, with some injuries. Additional rockets have come in from Yemen. (As usual, it seems that the Houthis are desperate for the news media to remember that they're out there, too.)

Several of the neighbors go back to bed before we get the all-clear. When we do, one caregiver heads back into the hall, ready to set her employer up in the safe space again. I show her the English-language message from Home Front Command. We can go back to bed. The voice on the overhead system mumbles another announcement. We assume that it's saying the same thing.

An announcement in the morning on the House WhatsApp group updates us on activity schedules starting Monday. Morning exercise, held in the shelter space on the ground floor, will resume as usual. So will most of the club activities, including woodworking, ceramics, and Yiddish conversation. But we still won't be having afternoon activities in the Culture Hall adjacent to the synagogue. Another message tells us that if we're leaving the building, we must check in and out at the front desk. In case of crisis, they need to know who is actually here.

The chief nurse brings lunch to the residents' rooms. I freeze in indecision when she asks me whether I want an apple or a peach. She's seen me do this before. "Here, you can have both."

Another nurse brings up my medications. Each evening starting tomorrow, I'm to bring my empty container to the infirmary myself and pick up the new set.

A musician in the family, here in town, tells us that her insurance doesn't cover her instruments in time of war. She has a lot of them, and her house doesn't have a shelter, so she's worried. She has brought the most valuable instruments with her as she stays with friends, but the rest won't fit in her car.

As of noon, we know that at least six people have died from the building relatively near where we rehearse, which took a direct hit. Photos show damage to all ten floors. But no one within the building's shelters was hurt.

The municipal WhatsApp announces Zoom activities: "FUN in the protected space - for mental resilience." They list online sports and fitness sessions, a lecture for parents on dealing with children in the wake of the situation, online museum tours and family gatherings, workshops and theater lessons for school children, musical activities for little ones, sports lessons for the elderly from home, and other cultural activities.

A Facebook message adds that there will be a babysitting service for children of essential workers at one of the schools.

The local paper tells us that the huge new fashion mall, one town over, has opened two parking levels, minus-4 and minus-5, as community shelters, able to hold ten thousand people. Cars can drive into the shelters. They say that there will be possibilities for long-term stay.

I speak to some staff members and residents in the lobby when I stop down to drop off my laundry. Many admit that they're scared.

It's hard for them to stay brave for their children when there are several missile alerts each night. And the confusing change in the alert patterns isn't helping. "Do we need an alert to tell us that there's going to be another alert before the alarm?" I can see use cases for it, but changing the pattern now is proving tricky.

The alert before the alert before the alarm at about 4 PM gives me time to go down to the shelter downstairs for a change. I get a Coke Zero from the soda machine on the way.

People from several blocks around us are gathered by the big TV outside the shelter space when I get there. For them, the sequence of alarms makes sense. They can get to the community shelter in our building without running.

When we hear the actual alert sirens, we head in. There are forty or fifty of us, plus six or seven dogs. Families cluster in portable chairs. Two young girls play checkers. There's no WiFi or phone signal in there, and we can't hear the sirens or announcements.

After ten minutes, people start to wander out. I'm one of the last to leave. The worker at the front desk hasn't heard any confirmation that it's over, but thinks it's OK. As I step away, the app sends the "All Clear."

I stop into Continual Care to check into the relative there, then get a WhatsApp video call from a relative in the States, checking in on us.

I check the news when I get back to my room. No word of impacts or casualties.

The local news site tells us that when the bakery/cafe nearest me shut down abruptly on Friday, the workers, zooming out, didn't lock the doors. Customers showed up on Saturday morning and found it open. Some took pastries and wrote on a paper bag what they took and their phone numbers. Management found out later, and didn't charge the customers.

The Railway Service announces that much of the system has been shut down. The line from my town to the airport is still operating, once

an hour, though no flights are arriving or leaving. The head of the Civil Aviation Authority tells us that it may be weeks before citizens abroad can return. Many airlines, including the one from Dubai on which a friend had flown out on the way to the Philippines, are being cautious about saying when they'll renew flights.

The next alert goes off at about 8:30 PM. I now know that I have enough time to drink some water and go to the bathroom. I sit down in my kitchen chair in the hall just as the missile alarms sound. There are booms, but not as big as I've heard before.

Six of us are out in the hall. I'm the only man, and the youngest person other than a caregiver who runs past. All but one of the others have wheeled walkers. Most sit on them or other chairs that they have brought out. One stands. When others offer to bring her a chair, she says that standing with her walker is more comfortable than sitting.

We talk in a combination of Hebrew, English, and a bit of French. One woman smiles and shrugs. She says, as she has said before, "If it's time for me to die, I'll die. I can't do anything about the missiles, so I don't worry about them." Later, she goes back into her room and emerges with a classic broadcast radio. She plugs it into an outlet in the hallway wall. The news in French blares forth. I can't understand it.

After a while, I get the official "All Clear" on the Home Front Command app in English. I show it to the others. The voice on the overhead clearly announces that it's OK to go back to our rooms. We do. We'll probably meet again later tonight.

Monday, June 16th, 2025

The tchoketa-tchoketa-tchoketa of the Home Front Command app, like a soundtrack to '70s robot porn, awakens me after midnight Monday morning. It's the alert before the alarm, or perhaps the alert before the alert. They make the same sound.

I go out into my hall at the House of a Hundred Grandmothers with my kitchen chair, sit, and wait. A normally talkative neighbor is already out there, sitting slumped on her walker. Her caregiver gestures to me: "Be quiet. She's OK. Sleeping."

The alarm never comes. After a long wait, I stumble back inside. Lesson learned: I'm not going into the hallway until I actually hear sirens.

I go back to sleep in my comfy chair. Several times during the night, I wake up. With my eyes still closed, I run through a litany to figure out where I am. Am I sitting on something hard? No. So I'm not in the hallway. Are my head and feet raised? Yes. I'm in my comfy chair in the living room.

I never do get into bed during the night. I had brought down my laundry at lunchtime, and hadn't made my bed with the other set of sheets afterward.

Another tchoketa-like alert awakens me at about 4 AM. I stay in the big chair. A few minutes later, when I hear the real sirens, I head out into the hall. My neighbors are awake and talkative again. We hear the biggest booms yet. Aircraft fly low overhead. We go back inside when we hear a mumbled announcement from the loudspeakers.

I sleep late enough that I fear that I have missed the breakfast and supper delivery, but after a few minutes, I hear my doorbell. A server, along with another member of the top staff, is there with the cart. The server likes me, perhaps because (unlike almost everyone else at my table in the Dining Hall and those nearby) I tend not to complain. She usually shows this by giving me way too much food.

She can tell that I'm bleary and that my waking mind hasn't quite kicked in. She guides me through the choices, pointing out what is available, and which I should eat for breakfast and which for supper.

I see in the news that there have been impacts with casualties in cities along our local transit lines. There were deaths within one shelter – as powerful as the walls are, almost nothing can stop a precise direct hit from a massive, unimpeded missile.

There have also been impacts with casualties in a major city. Friends and, I found out today, relatives live in a neighborhood quite nearby. I'll keep my worries muted unless I hear specific news of them. I'll be in touch with one tomorrow.

It seems that the majority of victims in the past few days have been elderly. It may have to do with people's abilities to react quickly and get to shelters in time.

I see that cities in Iran have also opened their schools, mosques, and subway stations as shelters. That's good. We're going after military and industrial targets, and would want to minimize civilian casualties where we can.

The local news sites have reported on the shoddy condition of some of our city's shelters. On the municipal WhatsApp, the mayor says that

they're working on it. The city asks that people scan barcodes on the public shelters as they enter them. I wonder what the codes do.

The municipal WhatsApp also announces free senior-care services via Uniper (not, as I had first thought, Juniper) and the city. According to the form, people can sign up in Hebrew, Russian, and Israeli Sign Language.

A local news site reports that Sunday evening was quiet along one of the main streets. Lots of people were out walking in the relatively cool air. The city's gym and pool, adjacent to the bakery that had forgotten to lock up, remain open. The building has shelters, and the new advanced alerts give people who are out enough time to take cover before attacks.

I see that the flights that I had mentioned being shut down from Dubai are actually from Abu Dhabi. Oops. I'm tired. Everyone's tired. We're making mistakes. As a rule of thumb, don't trust what people (even me) post on the Internet without checking solid sources. I can be pretty sure about what I see with my own eyes here at the House, but everything else is effectively hearsay, even though I mean well.

I've seen reports that the shelter at the Tel Aviv Central Bus Station is being opened, possibly for the first time since 1991. (The reports are incomplete, vague, or paywalled.) Word has it that it spans 15,000 square meters, and is safe from nuclear attack. I have only been to the station a few times. The building frightens and fascinates me, a monument to steadfast chaos.

I drop down to Continual Care a couple of times to check in on family and help out as I can. On the way out, I see other residents hanging out in the lobbies and the enclosed patio. I stop over to one who is sitting in a corner and ask how he's doing. He thanks me and wishes me well. He's one of our crankiest, most annoying and demanding neighbors. I suspect he doesn't get many friendly greetings.

At 8:30 PM, just as I sit down to compile and rewrite these notes, another tchoketa goes off. I drink some water, sit down in my comfy chair, and put on i24 News. The reporters are repeating themselves. I switch to the French language part of the app. Bibi is giving a news conference. I doubt that I miss much content in the translation.

After about forty minutes, they call off the alert. OK, then. I go back to my computer. I'll finish sending this, then should probably make my bed.

Tuesday, June 17th, 2025

The cleaner knocks, as usual, at about 7:30 AM, and then walks right in. I'm ready. She used to show up at different times on different Tuesdays, but it threw me off. I wouldn't know when to go down to breakfast. Our head of personnel at the House of a Hundred Grandmothers arranged that the cleaner would always show up between about 7 and 7:30. I think she now consistently comes to my apartment first.

She calls out "Good day!" with a big smile. I spin around at my desk and walk to the front door. "How are you?" I ask. "Praise God," she replies. In Arabic, as she says it, "*Alhamdulillah*," or in Hebrew, "*Baruch haShem*," it's a standard response when things aren't going perfectly, but you don't want to complain.

I apologize for the state of the apartment: "Pardon me. Everything's messier than usual, more jumbled than usual." She says it's OK and gets to work. There's a younger cleaner with her, who I don't think I've seen before. I think she's in training.

When they need to clean around my desk, I go to my bed and lie down. I actually slept there for all of last night, when I could. We had two alarms: One at a bit after midnight, with the now-usual pre-alert, and another at about 3:30 AM, without the tchoketa overture. The usual gang of neighbors gathered in the hall each time. There was a bit of conversation, then quiet. I think we're all learning how to awaken just enough to get out into the hallway, then doze off until the all-clear.

Weird nightmares also awakened me, as tends to happen on nights when we're not actually dodging missiles. In one, I was helping the cast of Glee install Linux on an ancient Mac, though the scene morphed into the Twin Peaks Red Room. In the other, a bus driver in a part of Brooklyn that I often dream about but which doesn't exist attempted to talk me into a fraudulent movie deal. When I pointed out that every single bit of the deal presented a different red flag, he tried to run me down with the bus. I woke up.

The cart with breakfast and supper comes by at about 8:30 AM. The Head of Marketing is helping out, along with the usual server. I juggle a plate full of vegetables, cheeses, warm hard-boiled eggs, and other items, and come back inside.

I finish the paragraph that I'm writing and step into the kitchen. An alert sounds.

(A word that I learn later, in the hallway: while an alarm is an “*aza-kah*,” an alert is a “*hatra’ah*.” I also discover that Google Translate thinks that both English words become “*hatra’ah*,” which made last night’s post confusing to someone who read it through that app.)

I have enough time to pour a cup of cold brew and step out into the hall, right when we hear the missile alarm. Everyone else shows up within a few seconds. The crew with the breakfast cart have just served the last room along the hall. They deftly make their way back to the other end, squeezing past the array of residents’ walkers.

We hear the loudest booms ever. The building shakes. A shockwave of air comes in from an open door far down the hall. No one budes. We know that we’re in the safest place possible.

One resident needs to go to the bathroom. Her caregiver isn’t around. I can’t help with this. Another woman, older, more frail, in a thin housecoat and without teeth, accompanies her in, and, later, back.

In Continual Care, people in the common room move to the safest spaces. Some line up along an inner wall. On the windows on the outer walls, the shockwave shakes the curtains.

After a few minutes, the voice of the CEO comes over the intercom: crisp, precise, and yet comforting. All clear. We can go back to our apartments.

Word flies around media, social and otherwise, about impacts in our town. There aren’t any serious injuries. A missile in an open parking lot has set an empty bus on fire. Word has it that a relatively new eight-floor apartment tower has taken a direct hit. It hasn’t, but a missile that has landed in an open field has damaged some residences.

There are photos, but I can’t tell where they are by looking at them. A lot of new buildings have gone up since I’m moved here, most of them sharing the same post-Brutalist black and white design, like crude Imperial Stormtroopers’ helmets made of Lego. A street sign in one photo of the bus lot shows that it isn’t the one near me.

The municipal WhatsApp group shares a picture of missile debris on the ground. It warns us not to approach or touch it. It says not to come and rubberneck at the impact site, since onlookers get in the way of rescue services. Later, international TV news clips show interviews with people who have come there anyway.

A relative needs to get to his daughter, who is about to go into labor. His son-in-law is currently deployed in Gaza. His wife is going to their

apartment to pick up some things. Their shelter is near enough that she can drive to it in time if we get a pre-alarm alert.

Her daughter stays with friends as she goes to the apartment. The child's Zoom classes for the day have been canceled, but the mother got her some new coloring books and crayons yesterday. The stress is triggering the mother's fibromyalgia, but the child appears content. She's spending the day watching webcasts from the Philharmonic.

Social media reports that the city kennel had been impacted have been deleted. Apparently, they felt the shock wave, but the dogs and people are fine, and don't need help. We're proud to see that the local news site's article saying that they're OK arbitrarily uses a photo of a relative's happy dog.

Home Front Command announces that it will be stopping the alert before the alert before the alarm. The single alert some ten minutes before the alarm will continue, but they don't consistently know about attacks far enough ahead of time to trigger the one before it. People (including me) have been getting confused as to which is which.

The municipal WhatsApp group says that Home Front Command has changed the long-standing rule that we can leave the shelters ten minutes after the alarms stop sounding. We now have to wait for an official all-clear. I understand that the Iranian missiles are faster and sneakier than what had been thrown at us before.

We get two alerts, one right after another, at about 5 PM. It's the end of my online Hebrew lesson. We know that we have a few minutes, so we finish up calmly. We go over the day's new vocabulary. Rather than using a textbook, we talk about our lives and note the new words that come up: interception, refinery, life expectancy, ear plugs. We go over the words for fractions, powers, and "square root" as I explain how shockwaves travel from explosion sites.

When the alarm goes off, I take my coffee and my kitchen chair to the hallway. Most of the usual residents join me there. One who rarely comes out of her room wanders out and drifts down the hall. Her caregiver is elsewhere. I try to explain to the resident that she should remain in our hallway. "Don't bother," another neighbor says. "Her mind's not really here."

After the official all-clear, I head down to Continual Care and check in on family. I help out as I can, moving items around and fetching medications. The staff knows me by now.

One nurse stops by and hands me my stick of daily medicines. “You haven’t brought your empty one down yet.” She’s right. I tell her that I’ll bring it down in a little while. When I’m done in Continual Care, I go to my room, scoop up the empty stick, and bring it back down.

Supper is one of my favorites: sabich, a pita stuffed with eggplant, hard-boiled egg, hummus, and who knows what else. There are other vegetables and light dairy items to go with it.

As I eat, I see my cold brew coffee maker, and realize that I haven’t set it up. It’s supposed to brew overnight and then decant in the morning. Mine is getting old and slow and takes several hours to finish that last stage. I usually set it up around lunchtime, then trigger it to drip out when I go to bed. I haven’t done that this time.

I get up and pour in the ground coffee (the pre-fab 85 gram packets from the store work perfectly) and the carafe of water. I find myself thinking that I’ll set it to decant after the three or four AM missile alarm. I can’t necessarily plan on there being one, but the odds are good.

Wednesday, June 18th, 2025

I’ve been wrong about the hallways.

I had been told, when I moved in to the House of a Hundred Grandmothers, that the hallways were every bit as safe as the large shelters downstairs. I had been trying to convince neighbors that this was so, and was concerned that they were not believing it.

I spoke to a member of the senior staff today about it. It turns out that I’m wrong. The hallways had been sufficient for the improvised tin cans that Hamas had been throwing at us. Apparently, that’s not true for the bigger missiles from Iran.

So now, if I hear the pre-alert, I have to head down three stories to the shelters on the ground floor.

I recognize that too many people across the country have to go greater distances. Media is showing the tent cities that are forming in large parking basements and within the new light rail stations.

We did have a couple of alarms last night, at about 12:30 and 1:30 AM. I hadn’t spoken to senior staff yet, so I stayed in the hallway and encouraged neighbors to do so, too. I was wrong.

I also woke up at about 3:30 AM and set my coffee to decant.

I'm exhausted. I'm feeling a bit broken by this latest information failure.

I have been developing a bad cough since before all this started. The doctor here prescribed an over-the-counter medication. Apparently some pharmacies are open. I don't know whether the buses are running. I'm wary of walking downtown. I haven't been outdoors in a week.

As I type this, the municipal WhatsApp channel announces that some public transportation is running "on a limited basis in accordance with the Ministry of Transportation's guidelines." Whatever those are at the moment.

The channel also sends out a link to a survey where people can let them know of elderly people or of those who have difficulty with technology, so they can help them in an emergency.

I catch the tail end of a TV report that restrictions on what can be open have changed. But I haven't seen that reflected in other media or official announcements.

At about 5 PM today, one of the nurses calls my room. I have forgotten to go down to her office to swap out my daily medications. She hears me stammer as I try to answer her. She says it's OK, and that she will come up with the new set later on.

There's an alert at about 7:30 PM. I sigh and head to the downstairs shelter. Once there, I smile and greet people. No one sits next to me. People leave after ten minutes (not understanding that that rule has ended) or when we get official word from Home Front Command. News later announces that the attack was just a single missile, which was intercepted.

I stop in to Continual Care to swap my medicines (since the nurse never did show up) and check in with family.

I get in the elevator and slump, but stand and smile again when a resident with a walker and her caregiver get in. They get off on the second floor.

The resident looks at me and says, "Have a good night... and a quiet one."

I nod.

Thursday, June 19th, 2025

Thursday's first alert is right after midnight. I normally take the stairs down, but an elevator is waiting as I walk past it. I squeeze in around a wheelchair. I'm large, but I'm flexible.

The nearer shelter on the ground floor at the House of a Hundred Grandmothers is busy, but not too crowded. (We have two, one in each wing.) I sit along a wall.

A couple from the neighborhood with a large and friendly dog sits next to me. The dog sniffs my hands. I signal to its owners that I don't mind. They loosen their grip on the leash, and the dog sniffs me more and licks my arms. They pull her back a bit when she tries to jump on my lap.

Several people in the shelter listen to the same radio news station on their phones. Due to issues of how signals get around and other technical whizbangery, the reports are out of sync. It's sounds like an impromptu version of Steve Reich's "Come Out."

The skies are quiet. Some people leave after ten minutes, even though we're not supposed to. We hear distant booms after they leave, but no one returns. We don't hear of any injuries.

The second alert comes at about 7 AM. I head down again. There are a lot of booms.

Rumors start to come in, repeated with varying accuracy by the people there. Hundreds of people around the country are reported injured.

The core reports are true: Iranian missiles have struck a major hospital and hit very near another one. I have walked past that second one, a couple of miles from where my ensemble rehearses. Other missiles hit a kindergarten in another town (closed for now, by order of Home Front Command) and something near the stock exchange, which is also near Tel Aviv's main train station.

The news sites report that the hit on the large hospital impacted a few wings that hadn't been properly fortified yet. The staff had moved the patients from there a few hours before.

The apartment house that was hit near my rehearsal spot had been slated for demolition, in preparation for a new, larger tower on the spot. Plans already in place to relocate the residents will continue – but a lot more quickly. The school in front of it was also, by government order, closed.

Home Front Command says that the latest missiles that hit us have a new feature: once back into the atmosphere, they break into clusters of smaller missiles, each with its own warhead. Even if the enemy claims to be aiming at specific (often fictitious) targets, they can't control the individual missiles once they break apart. The missiles can spread out randomly over a radius of several miles.

They show pictures of one on the ground, and remind us even more strongly not to touch them. The missiles and fragments may still house explosives, and a touch might trigger them.

I go back upstairs and try to follow the news, but I can't quite tell what's going on. When captions on the English-language channel say "Iranian strikes," they sometimes mean strikes in Iran and sometimes strikes by Iran. The automatic translation for the news sites and TV commentary can't keep up. In a single news article, Google Translate turns one term for a shelter, "mamad," into "police station," "fire alarm," and "central heating system."

Also, the official name for the operation, "*kalavi*, כָּלָבִי (like a lion)," is very close to the word "*kalbi*, כָּלָבִי (canine)." And Google Translate thinks that the original word also means "doghouse." In automatic translation, wackiness ensues.

The claims and statements that I hear blur. Countries blame each other for war crimes. Each warns the rest against rash action that will result in severe consequences. Each says that it controls the airspace above the other. Each says that it is going to destroy the other's nuclear capability, while insisting that it doesn't have any of its own. Each says that the people of the other are on the verge of rising up and changing their regime.

And, of course, the so-called Leader of the Free World seems to contradict himself several times within each single sentence (on the rare occasions that something he says actually resembles a full grammatical sentence). As I edit this, simultaneous headlines tell me that we're expecting him to make a decision within a day or two, while he's saying he'll make a decision within two weeks.

I go back downstairs after lunch to swap out my daily medications, get a Coke Zero from the machine, and visit Continual Care. My family there shows me an innovation: on the orders of some entity higher up, they now wear printed bracelets showing their name, National ID number, date of birth, health plan, location, and the facility's phone and fax numbers. Just in case.

The head of a major local sleep clinic reminds us of the long-term downsides of the sleep deprivation we're all experiencing. Right. I think if it weren't for the rhythm of the timing of meals, the muted camaraderie in the shelters, and my compulsive writing, I might be a total blob by now.

A local news site says that thousands of Israelis are expected to return via our local marina this weekend. It's next door to the ritzy hotel in which I once worked. I suspect there will be lots of rooms available, if needed. Tourism, reportedly, hasn't been great.

There are reports that hackers have shut down Iran's ATMs, credit card systems, and other networks, and wiped out their largest crypto system. They also took over Iranian TV to show footage of their own. It seems that we have somehow recruited Max Headroom.

As I head into my bathroom before supper, I see what look like orange flames emerging from the medicine cabinet. I stop, then gingerly approach. The mirrors show what's going on. The sun is setting outside my western windows on the opposite wall. The mirrors' edges, cut at an angle, reflect its flare in a line between them. Nothing, except the sun, is burning. There's no new crisis here, for now.

Friday, June 20th, 2025

At about 1 AM, I decide that I need a shower. I had dozed off watching Kate Bush videos, but woke up after an hour feeling scruffy. I can't remember if I had showered today or only yesterday. I do know that, if this night is like every other night in the past week, I'll have an impromptu meeting with my neighbors at the House of a Hundred Grandmothers before dawn. I should freshen up. This is the new calculus.

I get out of the shower and go to the computer to catch up on new messages. Now, at 3 AM, I'm a bit tired, but not sleepy. My body doesn't know what time of day it is.

The headlines tell me of an explosion outside the Norwegian Ambassador's house in my town. It wasn't a missile, though, just a grenade. These things happen.

There aren't any alarms overnight. My clock wakes me up at 7 AM, for no good reason. I move into my big comfy chair and fall asleep again.

Breakfast arrives at 8:15. The server is cheerful. I manage to be, too, for the moment. Unlike other days, supper isn't served along with it. Friday night supper is meat-based, so it can't be served along with dairy.

I eat a bit, then fall asleep in my chair. Lunch arrives at a bit after 11 AM. Later in the day, I can't remember what it was.

Our staff's Manager of Culture brings supper at about noon. She also brings us plastic envelopes with pencils, markers, and pages for coloring and Sudoku. A card at the front wishes us a quiet weekend.

I smile when I see it. The Manager asks to take my picture. I maintain the smile, holding the packet so that it is well-framed with my face and the card is right-side up. The picture will probably appear in our electric gallery in the lobby and in publicity.

A moment later, she knocks on my door again. She's holding a bottle of grape juice. "Do you have a glass? You'll want to make Kiddush for yourself tonight."

I bring a coffee cup over. She pours in enough for the blessing.

I eat lunch and head out. I have to pick up some medication for my cough. I had tried several apps, but each has its bugs and crashes, preventing me from ordering it online.

It's hard to get out the door. Putting on my socks is a difficult decision. Putting on my shoes is another.

I tell the worker at the front desk that I'm walking downtown. He nods and waves.

I get as far as a bench in the park outside. Walking to the pharmacy would take about half an hour. I seem to remember that Google Maps shows public shelters on the way. It doesn't.

I walk to the bus stop about a block from me. There won't be another bus for half an hour, but I know that in case of a missile alarm, I'll be able to walk back to the House in time.

Once downtown, I get the medication (about five dollars, over the counter), and some toothpaste, which I have badly needed. I also stop at a grocery store for some green apples and some dairy treats, which I particularly like.

I think there are about as many people out on the street as on any other Friday afternoon. No one looks particularly concerned. I wonder how many others are keenly aware that the nearest shelter is right behind the hummus joint at the other end of the square.

The next bus is in a few minutes, although the automated app keeps changing its mind about that. I take it straight home.

The alert before the alarm goes off right as I step into our parking lot. I sprint into the lobby. I tell the worker, "Perfect timing!" He looks confused. I often get the alerts and alarms a little before he does.

I head into the nearer shelter on the ground floor. People from the neighborhood shuffle in. Many have dogs. Many are listening to their phones. At a large table in the center, two little girls resume a game of chess that they had left there during the previous alarm.

Most of the people, once again, leave after ten minutes, even though they're not supposed to. We hear some distant booms.

I stop by Continual Care briefly, then head upstairs. The packaging of my medication confuses me. A roll of paper around the tube of pills has detailed instructions in Hebrew, Arabic, and Russian. I finally find out when and how to take it from my health plan's website.

When suppertime comes around, I say Kiddush and take out the pre-fab meal. I can't tell if I'm hungry. I nibble at some things, mostly the breaded broccoli.

I flip through some YouTube videos, then watch a documentary that I like on the making of *Hamilton*. I eat some grapes, then head back to my desk to finish writing this.

I try to decide whether I feel scruffy enough to need another shower. I don't know. I'll sit in my big chair again until I make a decision, or don't.

Saturday, June 21st, 2025

Saturday's first missile alarm is at about 2:30 AM. I stagger down the steps to the nearer downstairs shelter. Other residents and neighbors wander in. The couple with the big, friendly dog sits across the room from me. The dog curls up on the floor in front of them and goes back to sleep.

Later, family members in Continual Care tell me that there was another alarm, including sirens and overhead announcements on the House system, about two hours later. I didn't hear them. Neither the official Home Front Command app nor the newspapers mention sirens sounding around here at that time. Curious.

I awaken to the sound of the breakfast cart at about 8:15, like a cat hearing a can opener. The CEO of the House piles up my plate with

items for breakfast and supper. I fall asleep again, back in my chair. I eat breakfast later in the morning.

I feel awful for much of the day. My mind can't focus. While I can tell that the cough medication is having some effect, it's far from a cure.

I head down late in the afternoon to swap out my stick of pills and check in on family. I help out as I can, but my family tells me that I look terrible and to go back upstairs.

I get as far as a comfortable bank of chairs in front of the Dining Hall before I have another coughing fit. I sit there for about an hour as other residents pass in the hall.

One comes by with a fresh container of cookies and offers me one. She discovers that she can't open it. I give it a try. I find a hidden tab that is locking the container. I pop it open. Many food containers here seem to be designed by the people who make the plastic gizmos that dogs have to battle in order to get at their food. The dogs appear to enjoy that. Humans don't.

One of the first people whom I met when I started visiting here walks by with family. She used to sit across from us at Shabbat supper. I haven't seen her in years. I'm surprised that she's still here. I call out, "*Shabbat shalom!*" She looks startled and a bit afraid. I sense that she doesn't recognize me. From her movements, and those of the people around her, I get the sense that she doesn't recognize much else of what's around her anymore.

A man, full of energy after forty years in the army, stops in front of me. "You have to do sports," he commands. "Just a walk, at least half an hour, around the outside of the house, every three days. Then you can make it every two days." I cough again and thank him. Noted.

I drag myself upstairs, intending to eat supper, but just sit in my big chair for close to two hours. The sound of a fork falling to the floor brings me back to the present. I eat.

Over supper, I look at the news. Not much seems new, though much that doesn't would have been breaking headline fodder two weeks ago.

I see that the Iranians have been naming an array of successors for top positions, since they have been losing them so rapidly. I picture people in line staring nervously at the lists, like musicians at a union hall finding that they'll be the next drummer for Spinal Tap.

A WhatsApp message from the House staff tells us that we'll be re-summing breakfast and lunch (though not supper) in the Dining Hall as

of tomorrow. Good. It'll be nice to get together with my usual crowd there, rather than in shelters in the middle of the night.

Sunday, June 22nd, 2025

I'm already awake by 7 AM Sunday morning. Flushing my toilet partially drowns out the announcement on the overhead system. It sounds like it's confirming that breakfast will indeed be back in the dining hall. Good.

I only get a moment to look at messages. One relative tells another that Trump has delivered a birthday present.

The 7:25 missile alert sounds before I can find out what that might mean. I throw on the rest of my clothes and head down to the nearer shelter downstairs. I take my apron so I can head directly to the dining hall from there.

The alarm seems uneventful. The sirens sound several times in succession. We don't hear any booms, though people in Continual Care do. The usual array of residents and neighbors shuffle into the shelter then, after a while, shuffle out.

The tables in the dining hall are set normally. No one is in there. I sit outside, alone. The head of personnel comes by and tells me that, despite the announcement last night that the hall would be open, it's closed. The situation has changed.

I go back to my room and look at the news. Yup, things have changed.

The breakfast cart comes by at about 8:30 AM. The House's CEO dishes out various items, including warm scrambled eggs. We haven't had them in a while. I suspect that they had started cooking up a normal dining hall breakfast, then learned that they were switching back to the carts.

A little girl, walking along with them, hands out slices of cantaloupe. She may be someone's granddaughter, but I'm not sure. In a House of a Hundred Grandmothers, everyone belongs to everyone.

The news is the same that everyone sees. The US has attacked Iran. Iran has fired back at us, again. I see reports of impacts, destruction, and a lot of minor injuries in north Tel Aviv and neighboring suburbs, not far from here, but I can't quite tell where. There are no street signs in the images and footage that I see, and the architecture, as in much of the area, is so generic that I can't identify buildings. Some of the

fronts of shops and ground-level offices may have had logos and other markers, but they're not there anymore.

Relatives post photos of the trashed apartment of their child's piano teacher. It didn't take a direct hit, but the damage is pretty bad. The instruments are OK. So is he.

I hear in a news report that a large senior citizens' facility in the area had been damaged. It wasn't ours. We aren't large.

Another facility south of here is advertising new apartments on Facebook. I wonder if they're the replacements for the ones that were damaged in an attack there some months ago.

The major municipal library in Tel Aviv announces on Facebook that they have been damaged. Relatives used to work there. The building is closed, but they confirm that online activities, including checking out media via their app, will continue.

I sit in front of the TV and computer and look at detailed news reports. They probably aren't much different from the ones you're watching. Endless professors of constitutional law appear evenly split as to whether the attacks were valid. People argue over whether this side or that has violated some international law or are committing war crimes. Shouting about that during a war is always pointless propaganda. If these questions are ever answered, they're determined by the victors after the war.

People who I think would know better endlessly repost memes based on the ages of the various countries' leaders. Making these claims against other minorities would be called out by these same people, but blatant ageism is still seen as acceptable bigotry.

Meanwhile, people here are hunkering down to the work of creating more safe spaces. We have them by law, and we set things up so that as many people as possible can get to them in time. They aren't evenly distributed, but we're working on that. Our city has placed a large number of portable shelters around town in areas that don't yet have them nearby. They might not take a direct hit from a massive missile, but they're designed to be safe against anything less.

The large new mall, a few stops down the bus line, has set up partitions in its underground car park, so people sleeping in their cars can have more privacy. Their mayor says that he will be sleeping there tonight. Earlier in the evening, a popular capoeira performer will be giving a show for children.

A group of stand-up comics nearby are offering to perform for free in bomb shelters. And a Facebook post has announced a dating app for singles who are looking for love with others stuck in the same underground transit stations.

It takes me longer than usual to pull my laundry together. I'm used to bagging it up and bringing it down just before lunch. Since we're eating in our rooms, that rhythm is off. I still get it to the laundry shelves downstairs in time.

I stop by Continual Care in the afternoon. Not much is new there. Some of the residents, awakened by a missile alarm, had started screaming, which set off a chain of others screaming, too. The staff dealt with it.

I talk with family there and help out a little. The nurses and other workers are now wearing the paper ID bracelets, like the patients.

I pass by the dining hall on my way back to my room. The lights are out. The tables are still set for whatever meal we actually get to eat there next.

Monday, June 23rd, 2025

At a little after midnight on Monday, two roaches, one large, one small, greet me in the bathroom. I say, "Good evening." They don't respond, but don't run away either.

We get the roaches on occasion. They don't bother me. I'm told that they're due to the birds' nests on the roof. People are supposedly working on relocating the nests, but, with all the missiles, this isn't a great time to be working on a roof. Even the fiddlers are phoning it in.

At just before 3 AM, the voice of a relative in Continual Care awakens me, calling my name. No one else is in the room. Still, I remember enough of my family's streak of occasional, inexplicable clairvoyance that I pay attention to these things. I get up, put my sneakers on, and get a drink of water. The alert sounds about a minute later.

I head down to the nearer downstairs shelter, as usual, along with other residents and neighbors. The chairs are all facing toward a raised platform. There must have been a guided activity there yesterday. People quickly move them around into the usual clusters and vague circles.

We don't hear any booms or further alarms. We eventually head back.

As we wait for the elevators, our most annoying resident blasts Dean Martin from his Spotify app. No one wants to hear it. He doesn't seem to care. "Everyone loves music!" No. Not this music. Not now.

The next alarm is at about 10:30 AM. We all head down again. The shelter is as crowded as I've ever seen it. I take a seat at the far end of the room.

Several of the residents sit in chairs in a circle. One of the staff sits cross-legged on the floor at the center.

We don't get much word of what's happening. Eventually, we get the all-clear. On the way out, the staff member says to me in English, "Wow, that took a long time."

Back upstairs, I look through the news as I drink some more coffee.

On a local news site, a professional makeup artist details how to look good in a shelter in the middle of the night: tinted moisturizer, a bit of waterproof mascara, therapeutic lipstick in a natural shade, and hair kept together by a small clip or rubber band. Avoid anything that requires precision or careful smudging; it will only smudge further into a mess. I save the article, but doubt that I'll refer to it much, since I don't do drag.

At the start of the summer, as usual, jellyfish are swarming toward our shore. The beaches are officially closed, but jellyfish aren't known for keeping up on news alerts or responding to missile alarms.

An expert structural engineer, stuck overseas for the moment, suggests that we should rethink our approach to building shelters. These have to change every few decades, as we get attacks from bigger and bigger bombs.

Apparently, for a shelter to withstand a direct hit from what Iran is throwing at us nowadays, it would have to have concrete walls ten feet thick. Still, extremely few buildings have taken these hits. We have been careful to build new buildings with integrated shelters. Many buildings have taken damage to spaces closest to the outside, with minor casualties. The expert claims that those impacts would have completely destroyed most buildings in other parts of the world.

News sites are now showing the damage at a retirement community nearby that was hit in the past few days. It turns out that it was my relatives' number two pick, had they not moved in here to the House of a Hundred Grandmothers over a decade ago.

All of the residents have survived. Those from the nursing home area were moved to another facility nearby. (I have heard its name

announced on my bus line, but have never paid attention to where it is.) Other residents were taken to a neighborhood school before moving into a ritzy hotel along the shore. (That same hotel, if memory serves, is where friends were put up while waiting for a flight out of here at the start of the Gaza war. The governor of Florida, normally not known for doing useful things, had arranged for the flight. Word has it that he has done so again this time.)

Hmm. In the previous paragraph, I had written, at first, “at the start of the war.” Two weeks ago, that wouldn’t have been ambiguous. Now it is. Is what we’re experiencing now a new, simultaneous war or a new phase of the ongoing one? Eventually, historians may sort it out. Or, perhaps, not.

Police have started arresting people for refusing to let other people into their shelters. That’s the law: if someone during an alarm needs to get into your shelter, whether you know them or not, you have to let them in. Period. Video on YouTube showed one guy, in a fake American sheriff’s outfit and cap, slamming the door of his shelter in people’s faces. He’s among those arrested.

A major local rehabilitation center, a twenty-minute walk from here, posts how they’re handling things. They have sent some patients home who could handle it. They’re providing care, counseling, and physiotherapy to them via Zoom. About 130 patients remain. Within protected areas in the complex, the center has established three day care centers for children of employees.

Schools here remain closed. City officials have said that they’re particularly looking to restore special education classes, since they recognize the importance of routine to many of the students.

News reports say that some ultra-orthodox schools have refused to shut down during the crisis. The Education Minister said that he would sanction the schools, then said that he wouldn’t. At least, I think that’s where that stands.

A military funeral is being held this evening at the cemetery next to my old office. A WhatsApp message from the city ahead of time warns us that there will be ceremonial gunfire. I don’t know who the funeral is for.

In mid-afternoon, I go down to the medical area to swap out my stick of daily medications and visit my family in Continual Care. We get out of there for a while and sit in the relatively quiet lobby. I greet people who pass by and introduce some of the newer residents to my family.

In months past, one of them, who lives down the hall from me, had brought wonderful sweet challahs to the Dining Hall for Shabbat supper. I would slice them up and deliver them to the other residents at the tables as my relative who had said Kiddush would distribute the wine. She apologized for not having brought them recently. It turns out that she had been getting them from her brother, who runs a gourmet bakery nearby. It's been closed due to the war. I let her know that I had gotten a special, beautiful challah knife for the House, which I have stashed within the table where we make the blessing. We all look forward to getting to use it.

In sitting here and writing this, I find that I'm coughing less than before. The medicine I'm taking seems to be working. Good.

I need to do some cleaning up after I send this. The cleaner will be here first thing in the morning, and I would prefer not to feel embarrassed by how she finds things. In summer or winter, war or peace, her arrival is one thing on which I can depend.

Tuesday, June 24th, 2025

Tuesday's first missile alert sounds at about 5:15 AM. I haven't been asleep long. My sleep patterns have devolved to cat naps when I can get them. I think I had dozed off a few hours before. I'm not sure if I had had an absurd dream in which a leader of another country was claiming that we were about to have a ceasefire.

I get a drink of water and head downstairs. The nearer shelter fills up quickly. I make the mistake of sitting near our most annoying neighbor. He launches into a mumbled narrative having something to do with his granddaughter, Dean Martin (again), and a physiotherapist. (I'm not sure if the Oxford comma makes that better or worse.) I finally have to tell him that I have no idea what he's talking about.

The alert ends after twenty minutes or so. We head on out.

The second missile alert sounds at about 5:33, just as we reach the elevators. I instinctively wave my arm in a circle above my head and bellow, "*Yalla, nashuv*. (Come on, we're heading back.)" I'm not in charge, but no one appears to be. I'm just tall with a loud voice.

They've updated the Home Front Command app. In addition to showing text on the screen, it reads the alerts out loud. I use the English-language app. It also shows Spanish. Unfortunately, it uses the same

text-to-speech engine for all text in Latin characters, so it reads the Spanish like a fledgling local newscaster who has never encountered Latino names. The alert sounds something like *"In greasy a whora Alice pacey o protta jeedo masser canno."* (I can't get at the actual text when there isn't an alert happening, so I've asked ChatGPT to guess what the actual Spanish would have been.)

We return to the shelter. I sit at the far end of the room from the Dean Martin guy, who, perhaps intelligently, hadn't moved.

I don't see any staff there. On most other nights, I think I had seen a nurse from the Continual Care section. I later hear that they're really short-staffed tonight. There's only one nurse there now, after working a double shift, and he has to stay with them.

We hear what may be a loud boom nearby, but no word of impact. We do hear, however, of a direct hit on a building in Beersheba, with four dead.

We get the all-clear at about 6:05, and head back to the elevators. I'm not in a particular hurry, so I let others take the first elevators up and wait for the next time that they open. I get on the elevator with two people going to the second floor and another who is traveling with me to the third.

After the people for the second floor get off, the elevator starts to rise again, then screeches and stops. The destination panel goes blank. It begins a rapid, controlled plummet to the basement, with things outside it clanking along the way.

The doors open in the basement just as we hear the third alert, at about 6:10. That explains it. I suspect that the elevator system is networked into Home Front Command. We ride back up to the main floor and head back into the shelter.

More people are there. The sun is up. The dogs who come in with neighbors want to run around, but don't. The alert doesn't last long.

I have enough time, when I get back to my apartment, to use the bathroom before I hear the fourth alert, at about 6:35. I head back down, then, after the all-clear, back up.

I get as far as my kitchen before I hear the fifth alert, at about 7:12. I take a moment to pour a cold brew coffee before heading back down. I pass the cleaner along the way, pushing her cart toward my apartment.

Sitting in the shelter, I ask my family in the States where their nearest bomb shelters are. They don't know. They realize that maybe they should. It's been a long time since foreign aircraft have attacked the

East Coast. Relatives remind me that our grandfather was an Air Raid Warden in Philadelphia in World War II.

I Google my most recent hometown, but the one hit for “bomb shelter” is for a café with that name. Probably not useful.

We figure that this will be the last alert for a while, since missiles arriving now would have been fired just before the 7 AM ceasefire deadline. It’s like they’re having an end-of-season clearance sale on armaments, so they don’t have to store them away for next time.

That’s it for alarms for the day. I go back upstairs. The cleaner arrives soon after, followed by the breakfast cart.

I sleep, off and on, during much of the rest of the day. I leave the TV news on. I hear that at some point, either Iran or we have launched something at the other, who has retaliated. Nothing comes of it, except that each gets to claim that the other has violated the ceasefire. No surprise.

I hear the eloquent POTUS say before live cameras, as shown by subtitles, “We basically have two countries that have been fighting so long and so hard that they don’t know WTF they’re doing.” The audio shows that he didn’t use the abbreviation.

I have my usual online Hebrew lesson today. My teacher and I talk about how each of our cities have been facing the crisis. (Vocabulary words: rehabilitation, disabilities, evacuation, underground parking.)

I stop down to Continual Care after the lesson to swap out my daily stick of medications and visit family. I help out as I can. More workers come in as staffing returns to workable levels.

We gradually get word of things resetting and resuming. The airport is to reopen. So are schools. Restrictions on gatherings and workplaces are lifted. The dining hall is to be open again for breakfast.

People take breaths, though perhaps not deep ones. We’re reminded to keep our shelters clear and accessible, and to keep ready whatever we need to grab when we run down to them. Just in case.